

42
SPEECH

OF THE

HON. GEO. ALFRED CALDWELL,

OF KENTUCKY,

ON THE

CALIFORNIA AND TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JUNE 7, 1850.

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JOHN GEO. ALBERT CALDWELL

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, (Mr. BOYD in the Chair,) the California question—the President's Message relating thereto—and Mr. DORR's bill with the pending amendments thereto, being under consideration, Mr. CALDWELL said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN. During the present session of Congress, the blood of the boldest and best patriots in the land has been chilled with apprehensions for the fate of our Union. Excitement has pervaded the country through its length and breadth. The great popular heart has been beating and throbbing with anxiety and alarm. The eyes of the whole country are turned imploringly to the Capitol. The voice of the people has come up to us, earnestly, anxiously enquiring, if the wisdom of Congress cannot devise some plan of adjustment that will quiet the agitation, remove the danger that threatens us, and restore concord, harmony, and safety, to a distracted country. The answer to that question is yet concealed in the womb of time. I cannot answer it; nor do I believe that the wisdom of man can yet give a satisfactory and reliable answer. For myself, God knows there is no sacrifice of worldly comfort or happiness, of personal interest or popularity, that I would not gladly make to preserve our glorious Constitution and the Union. But the question still rings in our ears, cannot Congress agree upon some terms by which the difficulties may be adjusted? To arrive at a safe and satisfactory result in the enquiry, it may not be amiss to look into the causes which have produced the present unhappy and alarming state of things. To do this, we must go back far beyond the acquisition of California and the Territories that have played so conspicuous a part in the present controversy. The difficulty is older and deeper than this. The country has long been sorely agitated with similar controversies, having their origin in purposes similar to that which has raised the present fearful tempest. Fanaticism has been conspicuous as a disturbing cause, in producing those dissensions and difficulties. But fanaticism alone would have been harmless, had it not been seized upon, fomented, and wielded by those who had other and ulterior designs. Our present

difficulties and past excitements may be ascribed to the ambition of a certain class of Northern politicians, in their struggle for *political power*; a contest which has been raging since an early period in the history of our government.

Parties were first fully developed in this country during the administration of the elder Adams. The Republican or Democratic party had its principal strength in the South and West. The Federal party was sustained mainly by the North. It may almost be characterized as a contest between Virginia politics and Massachusetts politics. The result of that first political contest, is familiar history. The Federal party aiming at the establishment of a splendid central government, sought by every ingenuity, to enlarge the powers granted in the Constitution, and by implication and latitudinous constructions of that instrument, to derive and exercise powers which the States and people had never granted. Their great antagonists were Virginia statesmen. They were wedded to the sovereign rights of the States. They insisted on restraining the powers of the Federal Government within the limits of a strict construction of the Constitution. The contest was sharp and bitter. It resulted in the utter prostration of the Federal party, and the uninterrupted success of the Democratic party for a number of years. Ever since that period the leaders of the defeated party have been struggling to regain the power they have lost—to regain the confidence of the people, which had been lost to them, through the enormity of their own creed and practices. They have not always worked openly. Secret measures have sometimes been resorted to. They have tried through the agency of a United States Bank, with its myriad ramifications to control the politics of the country. They have tried by a splendid system of internal improvements, and the distribution of the proceeds of the public land sales, to buy up whole sections and States. They have tried by a system of onerous and oppressive taxation, sugared over with the captivating title of “protection to American industry,” to seduce from their creed, the noble-hearted Northern Democracy. Sir, what is more startling, they have gone beyond the legitimate range of political questions, and have dragged to their aid the phrensy of fanaticism, willing to accomplish the object dearest to their hearts—the acquisition of political power—at the price of all the perils that surround us—at the hazard of the frightful ills that may fall with fire and desolation, upon one-half the States of this Union. The contest throughout has been one for political ascendancy by the rejected party; and thus far they have been met by the firmness of the Northern Democracy, and their steady and almost unwavering adherence to the Constitution and the rights of the Sovereign States.

As early as the Missouri question, Mr. Rufus King, in his efforts to reject Missouri, because she was a slave State, declared that the question was “one of political power,” and appealed to the North not to surrender it. There are those yet among us, who were participators in the exciting and threatening scenes of that day. Does any one suppose that sympathy for the negro, actuated the leading Northern politicians in this wild crusade against the South, that came so near terminating in dissolution and blood? On the contrary their distinguished leaders declared openly at the time, that it was a “*question of political power*.” Some of

those who are now advocating the fanatical doctrines of Northern aggression, have had the unblushing audacity to slander the venerated dead, by appealing to the name of Jefferson, to sustain their positions.

It is known that Mr. Jefferson was abstractly opposed to the institution, but fortunately for the country, that illustrious statesman lived long enough to utter his most withering anathemas upon the leaders of the Missouri agitation. Listen to his words:

In a letter to Mr. Adams, dated January 22d, 1821, he says :

“ Our anxieties in this quarter are all concentrated in the question, what does the Holy Alliance in and out of Congress mean to do with us on the Missouri question ? And this, by the by, is but the name of the case, it is only the John Doe or Richard Roe of the ejection. The real question as seen in the States afflicted with this unfortunate population, is, are our slaves to be presented with freedom and a dagger ? For if Congress has the power to regulate the conditions of the inhabitants of the States, within the States, it will be but another exercise of that power to declare that all shall be free.”

Again, in a letter to General La Fayette, dated November 4th, 1823, he uses the following striking language :

“ On the eclipse of Federalism with us, although not its extinction, its leaders got up the Missouri question, under the false front of lessening the measure of slavery, but with the real view of producing a geographical division of parties, which might ensure them the next President. The people of the North went blindfold into the snare, followed their leaders for a while with a zeal truly moral, and laudable, until they became sensible that they were injuring instead of aiding the real interests of the slaves ; that they had been used merely as tools for electioneering purposes ; and that trick of hypocrisy then fell as quickly as it had been got up.”

Proofs might be multiplied to any desirable extent, but the above extracts are sufficient to show that if Mr. Jefferson were now living, he would stand, as he ever did stand during his life, the unwavering advocate of the constitutional rights and equality of the States.

In these extracts we find the testimony of a cotemporaneous witness, of the highest possible authority, that the Missouri question, with its startling train of alarm and peril to the country, was a “ false issue,” made by the leaders of the Federal party to enable them, “ under the false pretence of lessening the measure of slavery,” to produce a geographical division of parties, which might ensure to them the next President. His words may be useful in another respect, in admonishing Northern Democrats that many of their Northern brethren of that day, like many in this, went blindfold into the snare, to find to their own mortification that they had been deceived and used for electioneering purposes.

In 1824 the younger Adams was made President, and in 1828 he was rejected by an overwhelming vote of the people ; and to the day of his death, his intellect, his learning, and his influence, were devoted to a most relentless war upon the South. His design was to regain political power for the Northern school of politicians, and as the most effectual way of accomplishing this, he appealed to Northern fanaticism. His inflammatory speeches, with which this House was constantly excited, were always made in the name of humanity and Christianity. Veiling his real intentions under the appearance of submission to the divine will, he declared on this floor that he hoped to see the abolition of slavery in God’s own good time, though it cost the lives of five millions of women and children in the South. His was an incessant war for political power for the North. One great point of attack made by him

and his associates, was the representation based upon three-fifths of our slaves.

By reference to the journals of Congress, you will find that, on the 5th of February, 1844, Mr. Adams presented the *resolutions of the Legislature of Massachusetts*, asking for an amendment of the Constitution so as to exclude that portion of the representation of the Southern States which is based on their slave population. He not only came into this Hall imbued, himself, with the spirit of agitation, but he bore with him the sentiments of the State from which he came. He presented himself armed with the resolutions of her Legislature, a most potent weapon for that ceaseless and exciting war for political power. On the 25th of February, 1839, he presented resolutions to Congress so to amend the Constitution, as that

“From and after the 4th day of July, 1842, there shall be, throughout the United States, no hereditary slavery; but on and after that day, every child born within the United States, their territories or jurisdiction, shall be born free.”

The effect of this measure, if carried out, would be to rob the owners of their property without their consent, and without remuneration, and to ruin the slave States with an immense and uncontrollable and worthless free negro population.

During all this time, from about 1836 till the present time, the anti-slavery fanaticism of the North was being aroused to the highest pitch of frenzy, that these designing politicians, “under the false front of lessening the measure of slavery,” might enforce the success of their political schemes. Both houses of Congress were crowded with the most offensive and disgusting abolition petitions—incendiary publications were scattered among the slaves in the South, to incite them to revolt, rapine, and murder. Secret emissaries were sent among our slave population, and the condition of the whole South became imminently perilous and alarming. We were even threatened in this state of things that the Congress of the United States might, under the war-making power, abolish slavery in the States, as a means of getting rid of a “dangerous and troublesome population.” In vain did we appeal to the justice and fraternal feelings of that Northern party; in vain did we point to the Constitution to assert our equality and our right to enjoy in peace our property and our homes. In vain did we remind them of the fact that slavery existed in the States before the Union was formed—that it had been forced here, by the mother country, while these States were Colonies—that it was increased and extended by the cupidity and avarice of their own Northern slave merchants—until now the only alternatives left for the Southern States, were, our present system of slavery on the one hand, or *social and political equality and amalgamation with the blacks*, on the other—or perhaps a war between the races—the most relentless of all wars—in which one or the other must be exterminated.

With the institution as it is, the slave States fought gloriously through the Revolution. In that condition they went into the Convention as equal sovereign States, to consult with equals, about forming the Union. Had not that Convention recognized slavery, and guaranteed protection to slaves as property, the Union could not and would not have been formed. But I do not propose to argue the question of slavery. Ken-

tucky has recently settled that question for herself, and I stand by her determination. No earthly power has the right to supervise her decision. She is within her own limits, the supreme and the ultimate arbiter of that question.

It has been said that the annexation of Texas produced all our present difficulties. That if Texas had not been annexed, we would have had no war with Mexico, and would never have acquired the Territories about which we are disputing. The folly of this assertion, when we look back over the whole difficulty and its causes, is too palpable to need a serious refutation. Suppose we had not acquired Texas and the Territories from Mexico, what would now be the condition of the slave States? They would already, by the admission of Iowa and Wisconsin, have been left in a minority in both branches of Congress. The free States would be fifteen, the slave States but fourteen. By the annexation of Texas we have preserved to the present time that equilibrium between the two sections, so desirable to the South; without it the equilibrium would, before this, have been destroyed, and the South, even now, would be unable, by her numerical strength, to protect her rights in either branch of Congress. The slave States would have been limited for all time to fourteen States; for there was not remaining a single acre of territory south of the Missouri compromise line, except a small strip which had been set apart, permanently and forever, as a home for the Indians.

On the other hand, the free States would still be fifteen in number, with the Territories of Minnesota, and Nebraska, and Oregon, in a rapid state of progress for admission as free States, and an additional territory in the west, out of which their numbers might be almost indefinitely increased. The North would have had the giant's strength, and might if she chose, have used it like a giant for the accomplishment of her long cherished purposes. The annexation of Texas was a great national measure, but to the Southern States especially, was it of incalculable value. It has secured a vast and fertile territory, over which our slave population may be extended as it increases among us; and by the terms of annexation, four additional States may be made out of her territory, all of which will probably be south of the Missouri compromise line, and may be slave States.

I need not stop here to vindicate the war with Mexico; it has been sustained and applauded by a patriotic people, and has added fresh laurels and increased lustre to our flag. The acquisition of California, with her exhaustless treasures, and her magnificent harbors, is fraught with blessings incalculable to our Union, if good faith should be observed by our Northern States. If they should be devoid of good faith, the consequences would be equally fatal without, as with California. The dangers that threaten the Union may be likened to a volcano. The California question is but a crater, through which the smothered flames have found vent. A similar eruption broke forth through the Missouri question in 1820. A more recent one has forced its destructive and blackening lava through the church, and its angry effects may be seen in the torn fragments of the once united and prosperous Christian denominations. In the intervals we have heard the mutterings and felt the trembling that betoken so certainly the coming peril. The extent and power of this great disturb-

ing cause, no one can foretell. Having accomplished the exclusion of slavery from the Territories, the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the suppression of the slave trade between the States, the practical destruction of the constitutional provision for the surrender of fugitive slaves ; finally, the abolition of slavery *in the States*, may be the great opening through which these imprisoned fires may burst forth, burying in one common ruin, the Constitution and the Union, and flinging its light across the waters to announce to the Nations of the earth, the sad tale of freedom crushed, and man's last hope extinguished in endless night.

It is our duty, however, to endeavor earnestly to avert every danger to the Union, and to remove every cause of discord among the people of the various States, as they arise in the course of events, hoping that the Union and the Constitution may survive every shock and endure to the latest time. Deeply impressed with this most anxious wish of my heart, I have examined all the propositions for an adjustment of our present difficulties, with the limited capacity that I have been able to bring to the enquiry, under the disadvantages of a state of health which rendered it impossible for me to bestow much labor upon any subject. There are terms of adjustment, that in a spirit of conciliation I am willing to take, but I do not know whether such can command the approval of the two Houses of Congress. I am willing to plant myself on what I consider the Democratic doctrine of the country—growing out of a strict construction of the Constitution—based as that doctrine is upon the right of the sovereign States of this Union to regulate their own domestic concerns ; and denying to the General Government “the power to regulate the conditions of the inhabitants of the States” or Territories. I am willing to plant myself upon the doctrine that a State, when she asks admission into the Union, has the right to determine for herself, her own local institutions ; and while she is in a territorial condition that Congress shall not assume or exercise the power of “regulating the conditions of her inhabitants” or determining the character of her institutions. In other words, I stand by the doctrine of non-intervention by the General Government, in this question of slavery, in its fullest and broadest sense. This is no new doctrine to me ; I have successfully maintained it before my constituents, and I am now ready for the sake of concord and union to carry it out, by a practical application of it to California, New Mexico, and Utah, in that spirit of conciliation that shall waive objections growing out of irregularities and a departure from precedent, in the action of California. If we can pass a bill that shall organize territorial governments for Utah and New Mexico, without the Wilmot proviso, I will consent to couple with it a bill for the immediate admission of California as a State into the Union, leaving her people to determine the question of slavery for themselves, as the people of every State have the unquestionable right to do. In the same spirit of compromise I will not object to a clause in the bill which shall propose to Texas such terms for a fair and honorable settlement of the boundary between that State and New Mexico, as will most tend to secure the passage of this compromise, and restore tranquility and confidence to the country. I shall content myself for the present with this general outline of the terms on which I will con-

sent to a settlement of these various questions, without entering into details—leaving myself free to vote upon the various propositions and amendments that will come up, in such way as I may think best calculated to effect the great object in view—an entire settlement of the whole present difficulty on the best terms I can get for my constituents and the whole country. This will be recognized at once as the basis of the plan of adjustment, proposed by the Senate's Committee of Thirteen. But I wish distinctly to declare that whilst I shall to the extent I have indicated, advocate in good faith their plan of compromise, I do not adopt the reasoning contained in their report that accompanied the bill. Whilst my very heart is swelling with gratitude to the distinguished chairman of that committee (Mr. CLAY) for his earnest, untiring, and almost superhuman efforts to compromise this difficulty and restore peace to the country, I cannot concur in the individual sentiments he entertains and expresses on the subject of slavery in the Territories. On the 17th April, he said in the Senate, when speaking of "ultra abolitionists":

"I discriminate between them and the free-soilers of the North; for, sir, upon the point of slavery going into the new States, they are not more opposed to it than I am, and by no action of mine shall such a result ever be formed."

I advocate the measure because it is the best we can now do, without endorsing any views of others who may sustain it.

I am aware that there are grave objections to the admission of California with her present constitution and boundary, and as a separate measure I shall not vote for it. The Constitution says, "Congress *may* admit new States." The whole matter is in the discretion of Congress; and while I would not exercise that discretion harshly and with severity, I would exercise it with prudence and with caution. The people of California have prescribed for the new State a boundary that is unreasonably large. They have embraced in its limits the whole sea coast of that Territory—nearly a thousand miles—and have so run their lines as to include all the gold and quick-silver mines of that remarkable region. Their constitution was formed without authority of Congress previously given. We have no official evidence of the number or character of her population. And I have no doubt from the documents and correspondence officially published, that General Riley was directed by the present administration to issue his proclamation for a Convention to form a State Government in California, to enable this administration to avoid meeting the question of the Wilmot proviso. I think it is equally manifest that they were induced to believe that by excluding slavery from California in their State Constitution, they could more readily obtain admission into the Union, and that this consideration had its weight in their conventional action. These, however, are not insuperable objections, and although sufficiently grave and serious to prevent me from voting for her admission as a separate measure, I am willing to waive them if by so doing I can secure for the other Territories such territorial governments as I have indicated, unencumbered with the Wilmot proviso, and thus compromise the difficulties that distract and divide the country.

By these terms I admit the South will not obtain all that she ought to have; but I believe it is all she can *now* get, and I think she may well

consent to accept these terms, for the sake of peace and the preservation of the Union. Should this adjustment be made, the representatives of Southern interests, can return to their constituents, and tell them that the disgrace aimed at the slave States has been averted—that the Wilmot proviso has been rejected—that the General Government has not assumed an attitude of hostility to the institutions of the South—that every State in the Union may still gaze proudly and adoringly on our glorious flag, without weeping over the tarnished honor or faded lustre of any of her stars.

Two years ago the South could have got more; by the adoption of the bill which passed the Senate, and which was called Clayton's compromise bill, we could have had territorial governments with non-intervention—without the Wilmot proviso—for all the Territories, including that portion of the Territory of California which has since been laid off into a State. This would have given the South an equal chance in all those Territories, and would have avoided the agitation which has since prevailed, and which has resulted so much to the injury of the slave States. But that measure, the work of an able and patriotic committee of the Senate, fraught with so many advantages to the South, and bearing upon its wings balm to the whole country, was stricken down and defeated, by eight Southern votes—Southern Whig votes—and now the most that we can hope to get, is the application of the principles of that bill to the remaining portion of the Territories, after having lost the most valuable part of them.

The Wilmot proviso excitement—the constant threat of the North, that slavery should not go to the Territories—the failure of Congress to establish territorial governments—the defeat of the Clayton compromise—prevented slave owners from risking the taking of slaves to California; whilst the gold in that country attracted to her shores an emigration almost incredible in numbers. This vast multitude, without slaves, and most of them for the reasons above given, from the North, were easily induced to exclude slavery from their constitution, believing that was the only means by which they could be admitted into the Union. But this is past, and the same causes which produced it still continuing in operation, have gone to establish still more firmly that condition of things. The fairest portion of California is lost to the South; and by the operation in part of causes for which a portion of Southern statesmen are responsible.

When we reflect that the Southern States are in so woful a minority in this House, and are fast approaching the same condition in the other end of the Capitol, the inquiry constantly and painfully presses itself upon the true friends of the South, how are we to preserve our rights and equality as States in this Union? We cannot do it by ourselves, our numerical strength is not sufficient. We turn to the history of the past, to see if some clue cannot be found by which we may solve the difficulty. We find evidence to establish three facts: first, that the aggressions heretofore made upon our constitutional rights, and the assaults upon our peace and security have been made mainly with a view to the acquisition of political power for the North; secondly, that, during the long continued and constant agitation in various forms of the slavery question, we have received no sympathy or aid from the Northern States,

in maintaining our constitutional rights, and repelling aggression, except from the Democratic party; and thirdly, that Southern Whigs have been often found voting with the North on those occasions, and co-operating with those who were most inimical to our peace and our institutions. The first of these propositions I have already sufficiently noticed. I now propose, briefly, to notice the two others, and to treat of them together.

In the 25th Congress, when abolition petitions were pouring into both Houses, and great agitation prevailed on the subject, Mr. ATHERTON, a Democrat from New Hampshire, offered a series of bold, strong resolutions, declaratory of the rights of the South, and denouncing the Northern agitators; these resolutions were sustained and passed by an almost united vote of the Northern Democrats—the Northern Whigs voting against them.

At the extra session of the celebrated 27th Congress, in 1841, the House was kept in a state of disorganization, and the highest excitement, from the day of meeting, the 31st of May, till the 16th of June, by an effort to rescind or exclude the 21st rule—a rule that rejected abolition petitions. By reference to the Congressional Globe of that session, page 56, it will be seen that a large number of *Southern Whigs*, voted for the resolution of John Q. Adams to exclude that rule, and let in the abolition petitions, whilst every Northern Democrat voted to sustain the rule, and keep out those firebrand petitions, except four. Every one familiar with the history of those exciting times, knows that this was the steady and uniform course of the great body of Northern Democrats.

On page 62, of the same volume, Mr. GORDON, a Democratic member from the State of New York, is reported to have denied that the Northern Whigs had expressed on the subject of abolitionism, the views of Northern Democrats. He declared to his “brethren of the South that the Democratic portion of the people of the North sympathise with them; that they understand the rights of the South under the guarantees of the Constitution, and will not suffer those rights to be invaded.” * * * “That the division line between abolitionism and anti-abolitionism, is not Mason and Dixon’s line—that the division, so far as the North is concerned, is not a geographical but a political division. I desire an opportunity to show that the majority on this floor (the Whigs) represent abolitionism.”

At the second session of the same Congress, a petition was presented from citizens of Massachusetts, praying that our Government enter into diplomatic and commercial relations with the *free negro* Republic of Hayti, by which we would send a minister to their court, and receive here at Washington, on a footing with the ministers of other nations, their *free negro* ambassador or chargé. A motion was made to get rid of the petition by laying it on the table. A large number of the Northern Democrats voted with the South in the affirmative, whilst all the Northern Whigs and some of the Southern Whigs voted in the negative. During the same session, Mr. GIDDINGS, a Whig abolition member from Ohio, offered a series of resolutions, in which he declared, amongst other wicked and outrageous things, that the slaves on board the brig Creole, who on their passage from Virginia to New Orleans, had mutinied and murdered a part of the crew and taken possession of the ship, had *right-*

fully gained their freedom, and "had incurred no legal penalty," and were justly liable to no punishment." Mr. WELLER, a Democratic member from Ohio, offered a resolution to censure Mr. GIDDINGS for offering these resolutions. Every Northern Democrat except seven, voted with the Southern members for WELLER's resolution, whilst the Northern Whigs voted against it. But I have not time to dwell on these proofs, of which I now have on my notes before me a long list taken from the authentic records of Congress.

During the negotiations for the annexation of Texas, both Houses of Congress were flooded with petitions from the North objecting to the measure, *on the ground that it was a slave State*, yet the great body of the Northern Democrats voted for it, making no objection to adding strength to the Southern portion of the Union.

I have already adverted to the bill called Clayton's compromise, introduced two years ago for the purpose of settling this very agitation, and only refer to it again in this connection to remark that whilst it was defeated by the votes of eight Southern Whigs, who voted with the North, there were twenty-one Northern Democrats who, at the risk of their popularity at home, where the excitement was raging most fearfully, came boldly forward and voted with the South, to save that salutary and healing measure from the fate to which Northern fanaticism would consign it.

As a part of the history of this excitement we find that the casting vote of a Northern Democratic Vice President has been given in the Senate on the side of the South; and the only other casting vote that I can find given by the presiding officer of either House, relating to this subject, is one given by a Northern Whig Speaker of the lower House in favor of the North. We might also draw a contrast between the course of a Northern Democratic President who warned Congress in advance, during a period of great excitement on this subject, that he would veto any bill abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, with the course of the present Chief Magistrate, a Southern Whig, whose best friends cannot even now tell whether he will or will not veto a bill containing the Wilmot proviso.

During the last Congress a member from Ohio (Mr. GIDDINGS) introduced a resolution to take the vote of this District on the question of abolishing slavery here, in which he proposed to take the vote of every male over twenty-one years of age, *including free negroes and slaves*; a motion being made to lay the resolution on the table, for the purpose of getting rid of it, only nine Northern Whigs voted to lay it on the table; all the other Northern Whigs present voting with Mr. Giddings to keep it before the House.

The limits of a speech will not allow me to do more than thus briefly glance at a few of the evidences, of which the Congressional records for the last fifteen years are full, to establish the position I have taken. The facts are so well known here that even this much is unnecessary. During the last Presidential canvass, it was publicly declared by the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. WEBSTER,) that the Free Soil party had stolen their creed from the Whig party, and that the only hope of carrying out the Free Soil doctrine was by throwing into the Congress of the United States a greater amount of Whig strength. I

do not pretend that all the Northern Democracy have always voted to sustain our rights. My proposition is, that the only hope we have of getting any aid from the North, in maintaining our constitutional rights and guarantees, rests with the Democratic party in that section, and in this the past history of parties sustains me to the fullest extent. How is it at this time, amid the fearful strife now raging and filling the country with alarm? In a woful minority on this floor, where do we turn our eyes for succor? I appeal to my Southern friends on the Whig side to say whether they have any hope that a single Northern Whig can be counted for any settlement of this question that the South can take. Sir, there is no answer because there is no such hope. Not one of them can be counted, for all are known to be against us. Turn to our side of the House, and it is known and admitted by every one here that there are many Northern Democrats, who are not only willing but anxious to settle this question, upon terms that will preserve our constitutional rights and guarantees. This has been publicly admitted by Southern Whigs on this floor, and privately I believe none will deny it. "The sober second thought" is again aroused amongst the masses of the Northern Democracy, and they have spoken out, through their mass meetings, their Conventions, their public press, and their Legislatures; many of which have rejected the Wilmot proviso, and stretched forth the hand of fraternal concord to the South, on the broad principles of that equality of rights which the Constitution intended to secure. No such demonstrations are seen among Northern Whigs. With that cold, callous, indifference to our appeals, and to all the impending perils, which conscious power and relentless injustice can inspire, they accede to no terms, grant no quarter; like the Jew who smiled upon the anguish of his victim, and exclaimed "I demand the pound of flesh, it is the bond."

Under the lead of the noble and patriotic Buchanan, the Democratic Legislature of Pennsylvania have repealed their laws against surrendering fugitive slaves, and her Democratic State Convention have repudiated the Wilmot proviso. The Democratic Legislature of Michigan has repealed the instructions with which her great and patriotic statesman (Mr. Cass) had been fettered, and thus made him free to act for the preservation of the Constitution and the Union.

It cannot be denied that many of our Democratic friends in the North have, on account of their advocacy of our rights, been stricken down by the arm of fanaticism, wielded by the Whig party—that some when hard pressed and threatened with political destruction, have faltered—that others have been honestly misled and deceived by fanaticism, under the "false front" of a pretended philanthropy, whilst others, guided by an unholy and consuming ambition, have merged all obligation to country, Constitution, and the cause of justice, in the one unworthy sentiment of self-aggrandizement. But still I hope the great mass of the party is sound upon the doctrine that maintains a strict construction of the Constitution, and the sovereign rights of the States of this Confederacy—the doctrine upon which the slave States must rely for their security and peace.

Southern Whigs cannot be held blameless for the present weakness of our friends at the North. They have furnished (I hope unintentionally) many of the weapons for their destruction. By voting with the

North and acting with them in so many instances, they have placed it in the power of the Whigs and Abolitionists there, to appeal to the prejudices of the people, and tell them that Northern Democrats were sustaining an institution that even Southern Whigs would not vindicate to the same extent. Again, Whigs from the slave States have gone into the free States and aided in defeating those who have stood by us in our darkest hours.

In 1838 or '39, the Legislature of Kentucky sent two commissioners to Ohio, to apply to her Legislature, which was then in session, for the passage of a law on the subject of fugitive slaves. The *Democrats*, who had a majority in the Legislature, passed a law on the subject that was entirely satisfactory and highly gratifying to the commissioners and to the State of Kentucky—*every Whig* in the Legislature, with perhaps one or two exceptions, voting against it. The very next year, or the year following, whilst a most exciting canvass was going on in Ohio, and when it was well known that this very law was an important weapon used by the Whigs and Abolitionists to break down the Democratic party who had passed it, Whig orators from Kentucky went into Ohio, took the stump, and mingled in the fight, and materially aided in carrying the State for the Whigs. If I am not mistaken, one or both of those very commissioners were among the number.

The Whig Legislature, thus elected to power, amongst their first acts, repealed the law, and the Abolitionists of that State have been stealing our slaves ever since.

In the last Presidential canvass, many of our distinguished Whig leaders in Kentucky, went into Ohio and Indiana, making stump speeches and pledging General Taylor not to veto the Wilmot proviso. These are facts which I have from prominent citizens of those States of both political parties—facts which were published in the papers of those States at the time, and which have not been denied either then or since.

It is truly unfortunate that many of our Southern Whigs, by their political alliance with that Northern party whose unceasing struggle has been for "political power" for the North, have been blinded by their party zeal to the true interests of the slave States. It has been frankly admitted by some of them on this floor during the present session of Congress, that millions of dollars have been annually taken from the labor of the South, and given to the North to increase the profits on their capital, by the operation of protective tariffs. Yet those very gentlemen know, and the whole country knows, that the Northern Democracy have had no agency in this system of plunder, whilst those Southern Whigs and their associates in the slave States have aided by their speeches, their votes, and their influence, in taking these vast sums from the pockets of their constituents, and transferring them to Northern capitalists for the purpose of building up and sustaining the power of that Northern party, which has ever been at war with the interests and the institutions of the slave States. The Northern Democrats have been throughout subjected to a severe and trying ordeal. How long they will be able to withstand the increasing fury of fanaticism and faction, and the power of capital, that has been incessantly warring upon their ranks, is a question which to my mind brings constantly the deepest solicitude for the peace and the rights of the South, and the safety of the Union. Should they be

beaten down and destroyed, or forced to yield to the pressure of circumstances, that all their patriotic efforts have failed to control, the Constitution and the Union may share the same fate, and all may sink together. But history in recording the sad tale will charge the crime to the guilty party. It has been the custom to charge the South with sentiments of disunion. Let those who make the charge blush at the recollection that the disunion movements in this government have come from the free States, and principally from Massachusetts and New England—let them remember the petitions that have been presented to Congress from those regions asking directly for a dissolution of the Union—let them remember Shay's rebellion, the Whiskey rebellion, the "*ten cent*" (postage) rebellion in Boston, and the Hartford Convention—let them remember that they have urged measures here that they knew must result in disunion, if not intended to produce it; amongst which were the resolutions of the Massachusetts Legislature for an amendment of the Constitution to exclude the representation based on slaves—the resolutions presented by Mr. Adams so to amend the Constitution as to abolish slavery directly in the States, and the petition introduced at the present session of Congress, into the Senate, to enroll our slaves among the militia—let them remember that a distinguished statesman of Massachusetts declared that the annexation of Texas would not only dissolve the Union, but would fully justify it—let them remember that it was a New York Senator who *repudiated the obligation of his oath* to support the Constitution, when that oath should conflict with his fanatical opinions—let them contrast the patriotic devotion of the South to the flag of the Union, with the conduct of New England in our glorious war with Mexico—and finally, let them never forget that a deep and fearful suspicion rested on New England during the dark period of our second war for Independence. In a letter to General La Fayette dated May 14, 1817, Mr. Jefferson, speaking of the success of Democracy, said:

"Massachusetts indeed still lags; because most deeply involved in the paracidal crimes and misdeeds of the war."

The Southern States have on all occasions proven their devotion to our Constitution and have most scrupulously observed every obligation contained in it, and every contract made under it, not only to the letter, but in that spirit of fairness that should ensure concord and fraternity. They love this Union, because it is by the charter a Union of free and equal sovereign States, independent of each other as to all that relates to their internal administration. In a letter to Mr. Tracy dated January 1, 1811, Mr. Jefferson thus speaks of our form of government:

"But the true barriers of our liberty in this country are our State Governments. And the best conservative power ever contrived by man, is that of which our revolution and present government found us possessed." * * * * * The several "distinct States, amalgamated into one as to their foreign concerns, but single and independent as to their internal administration."

Destroy that *independence*—destroy that *equality*, that *sovereignty* of the members—and it ceases to be *that Union* which our fathers formed, and for which they so earnestly invoked the ardent and lasting devotion of posterity. When the constitutional guarantees of the separate States shall all cease to be of binding force on the majority in Congress—when all the ties of concord and fraternity shall have been frittered away by long-

continued insult, or abruptly snapt by outrage, *this union of free States* must cease to exist. You may possibly still preserve a *union*; not because of any continued obligatory force in the contract that formed the Confederacy, but by either the voluntary and tame submission of the injured party, or by the strong arm of force, wielded by the oppressors. How long it might continue by the operation of the first named cause, I cannot say. The slave States have already borne with many and grievous wrongs for the sake of the Union. It may be, that they will suffer on as long as their safety and their honor will permit; as long as the aggressions are deemed more tolerable than disunion. But I warn gentlemen, that should these aggressions and wrongs go on increasing in power by past success, until the confidence of the slave States shall be destroyed and their affections turned into hate—until driven to desperation and encircled with a cordon of fire, their honor, their peace, and the safety of their homes and their families shall bid them *act*—it will be idle then to talk about *preserving this Union by force*. Your Federal armies may desolate their fields and drench their streets with blood. You may invoke the genius that reigned over the horrid tragedy of San Domingo, to re-enact his work of fire and death. You may *possibly* subject them by the sword to your *dominion*, but you cannot preserve a union of free and equal and independent States by force. A *union* indeed! It would be such a union as poor starving Ireland may boast with her oppressors—such a union as the once gallant, but now manacled and partitioned Poland enjoys with the tyrants that crushed her—such a union as Hungary, glorious, bleeding, unfortunate Hungary has been forced to embrace, with the despots whose guilty hands were still reeking in her patriotic gore.

May God forbid that our Northern brethren should madly rush to such extremes, under any delusive belief that, after all the ties of friendship, concord, and fraternity have been destroyed, they can preserve this Union by force.